

Message Text

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66/63

ACTION EA-14

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R 230950Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5735

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 5126

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TO TEXTS NBRD PARAS FIVE AND SIX)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MY SN

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER RAZAK'S VISIT TO SINGAPORE

REF: A. SINGAPORE 4439

B. KUALA LUMPUR 4929

1. SUMMARY: BY ALL ACCOUNTS, PRIME MINISTER RAZAK'S VISIT TO SINGAPORE NOV 13-15 WAS DISTINCT SUCCESS, WITH EVERY EXPECTATION FOR REGULARIZATION OF RELATIONS AND MORE FREQUENT CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. NOTWITHSTANDING MINOR PROBLEMS TO BE WORKED OUT AND HOPEFULLY AMELIORATED, WE ENVISAGE INCREASED CONTACTS AMONG TOP GOM AND GOS LEADERS AND MORE INTERMINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS. POPULAR CLIMATE IN MALAYSIA SEEMS RIPE FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF MORE CORDIAL RELATIONS, ALTHOUGH VERY MINOR OR ALLEGED GRIEVANCES CAN EASILY INTRUDE ON BUSINESSLIKE CONDUCT OF RELATIONS WITH GOS. ALSO, WHILE
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INTERCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND IDEAS BETWEEN GOM AND GOS MAY IMPROVE, IT MUST BE RECOGNIZED THAT SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES WILL CONTINUE TO EXIST ON POLICY LEVEL, ESPECIALLY IN FOREIGN POLICY FIELD. END SUMMARY.

2. OFFICIAL MALAYSIAN REACTION TO VISIT OF PM RAZAK TO SINGAPORE AND TALKS BETWEEN GOM AND GOS LEADERS IS HIGHLY FAVORABLE, WITH EXPECTATION THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WILL BE REGULARIZED AND THAT GOVERNMENTAL CONTACTS, AT LEAST AT TOP LEADERSHIP AND MINISTERIAL WORKING LEVELS, WILL BECOME MORE FREQUENT. MFA SEC-GEN ZAITON TOLD AMBASSADOR NOV 23 THAT TALKS BETWEEN RAZAK AND LEE (WITH NO ONE ELSE PRESENT) AS WELL AS TALKS BETWEEN MEMBERS OF RAZAK'S ENTOURAGE AND SINGAPORE OFFICIALS WERE FRANK, CORDIAL AND USEFUL. SIMILAR REACTIONS HAVE BEEN OBTAINED FROM PM'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISER, ZAIN AZRAAI, OTHER GOM AND MFA OFFICIALS, AND FROM SINGAPORE HIGH COMMISSION COUNSELLOR HERE.

3. RAZAK HAD EXTENSIVE PRIVATE TALKS WITH LEE, ZAITON SAID; THE TWO LEADERS HIT IT OFF EXTREMELY WELL AND WITH GOOD SENSE OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. BOTH LEADERS SEEMED TO AGREE THAT MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE MUST SEEK SEPARATE DESTINIES, BUT THAT THERE HOPEFULLY WOULD BE MANY AREAS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO STATES; NEVERTHELESS, EACH LEADER WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE NECESSITY THAT NATIONAL INTERESTS WILL ON OCCASION CAUSE THEM TO DIFFER.

4. DURING VISIT, SINGAPOREANS PRESENTED EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE BRIEFING ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ON INTERNAL SECURITY MATTERS. ACCORDING TO SINGAPORE HICOM COUNSELLOR, TALKS ON SECURITY ALSO DEALT WITH COMMUNIST THREAT IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THAILAND. RAZAK AND LEE REPORTEDLY AGREED THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES SHOULD CONSULT MORE CLOSELY ON SECURITY MATTERS. IN THIS RESPECT, LEE REPORTEDLY ASSERTED THAT SINGAPORE'S SECURITY DEPENDS IN FIRST INSTANCE ON MALAYSIA'S ABILITY TO COMBAT COMMUNIST INFLUENCES AND EXPRESSED SOME ANXIETY OVER RECENT APPARENT INCREASE IN TERRORIST ACTIVITY IN PERAK AND ELSEWHERE (SEE KL A-205, 11/19/73). LEE ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT NEW THAI GOVERNMENT, BOTH ITS ABILITY TO ENDURE AND ITS POSTURE VIS A VIS THE COMMUNISTS.

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5. ON OTHER MATTERS, BOTH LEADERS AGREED TO EXAMINE BROAD RANGE OF CAUSEWAY RELATED PROBLEMS WITH VIEW TO REDUCING CONTROLS ON BOTH SIDES. AGAIN ACCORDING TO HICOM COUNSELLOR, RAZAK AND LEE CONCURRED THAT PETTY PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN CROSS-CAUSEWAY RELATIONS STEM FROM OVER-ZEALOUS AND RELATIVELY LOW-RANKING OFFICIALS ON BOTH SIDES WHO ARE QUICK TO REACT TO ANY IMAGINED SLIGHT FROM THE OTHER SIDE. GOM MINISTER WITH SPECIAL FUNCTIONS MICHAEL CHEN, WHO ACCOMPANIED RAZAK TO SINGAPORE, TOLD EMBOFF NOV 22 THAT GROUNDWORK HAS BEEN LAID FOR FAIRLY EXTENSIVE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN TWO GOVTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS. OVERALL, PROMISE IS FOR MORE EXTENSIVE AND REGULAR CONSULTATIONS ON MINISTERIAL AND WORKING LEVELS; CITED AS EXAMPLE FOR THIS PATTERN WERE WORKING LEVEL CONTACTS BETWEEN

GOM PRIMARY INDUSTRIES MINISTRY AND GOS COUNTERPART LATE LAST WEEK ON MEASURES TO BE TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE SUFFICIENT SUPPLIES OF OIL.

6. NEWSPAPERS HERE HAVE LAUDED "FRIENDLY SUMMIT" BETWEEN RAZAK AND LEE, NOTING LAUNCHING OF CLOSER AND MORE PRAGMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO NATIONS. MALAY LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS, USUALLY QUICK TO PLAY UP EVEN MOST MINOR IRRITATIONS WITH SINGAPORE, WERE PARTICULARLY FRIENDLY TO IDEA OF CLOSER RELATIONS DESPITE PAST TENSIONS INVOLVING SPLITS OF MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE AIRWAYS, CURRENCY INTERCHANGEABILITY, AND SECURITY AND RUBBER MARKETS. "UTUSAN MALAYSIA", FOR EXAMPLE, SAID THAT PERSONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO LEADERS WILL STRENGTHEN GOVT-TO-GOVT RELATIONS. CALLING LEE PRAGMATIC AND RAZAK A REALIST, "UTUSAN" ALSO SAID BOTH MEN ARE AWARE OF COMMON GOM/GOS INTERESTS AND THE INCREASED IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION.

7. COMMENT: PORTENTS ARE FOR IMPROVEMENT OF GOVT-TO-GOVT RELATIONS AND THERE IS CLEAR EXPECTATION HERE THAT CLIMATE BETWEEN TWO GOVTS WILL BECOME MORE CORDIAL, IF NOT CLOSE. RAZAK'S JOURNEY TO SINGAPORE, PERHAPS MORE THAN LEE'S VISIT TO K.L. IN EARLY 1972, HAS IMMEASURABLY AIDED IN ESTABLISHING NEW BASIS FOR STATE-TO-STATE RELATIONS, WITH CONCOMITANT END TO "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WHICH AS FREQUENTLY NOTED HERE (SEE REF B) OFTEN PRODUCED UNWARRANTED EXPECTATIONS AND UN-NECESSARY FRICTIONS. AT SAME TIME, NEITHER SIDE IMAGINES THAT RAPPROCHMENT WILL TAKE PLACE EQUALLY AT ALL LEVELS AND BOTH ARE AWARE THAT COMPARATIVELY MINOR FRICTIONS WILL

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CONTINUE TO INTRUDE BBSPITE FRIENDLINESS AT THE TOP. FOR EXAMPLE, STATEMENT OF JOHORE OFFICIAL NOV 22 THAT MALAYSIA MUST GUARD AGAINST FUEL-SHORT SINGAPOREANS FILLING THEIR TANKS ON THIS SIDE OF THE CAUSEWAY IS TYPICAL OF LINGERING SUSPICION AND HOSTILITY TOWARD SINGAPORE. WE CAN, HOWEVER, EXPECT IN COMING MONTHS THE EMERGENCE OF A PATTERN OF CLOSER RELATIONS, PRIMARILY ON THE WORKING LEVEL, TO BE CEMENTED BY MORE FREQUENT NEIGHBORLY VISITS OF OFFICIALS OF BOTH COUNTRIES. ON FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS, SUBSTANTIAL DIVERGENCIES WILL CONTINUE TO EXIST AS GOM PURSUES CLOSER RELATIONS WITH PRC, CAMPAIGN FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN NEUTRALIZATION AND STRAITS OF MALACCA CLAIM AMONG OTHER ISSUES. BY THE SAME TOKEN, PROSPECT EXISTS THAT GOM AND GOS CAN ACCEPT SUCH DIFFERENCES IN FRANK AND OPEN MANNER, LEADING NOT ONLY TO STABILIZATION OF OFFICIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVTS BUT ALSO TO DEEPER AND MORE REALISTIC UNDERSTANDINGS IN ASEAN AND ASIAN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS. LYDMAN

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